

Your Honor,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to tell you about my son and for taking the time to read it. My name is Shelly Nicozisin, I have been married for 26 years to my college sweetheart, a mother of two boys, and have been a teacher in the Parkway School District for 17 years. I currently teach kindergarten and volunteer at our church. My husband owns a small family-owned dry cleaning business in Ellisville. We have had our struggles, just as any family has, but we have never given up or stopped loving one another.

Luke is my first-born son, and I had the privilege of being a stay-at-home mother to him for the first nine years of his life. I have spent almost every day with Luke minus the time he has been incarcerated. I know my son better than anyone else on this earth. Parenting is the hardest thing to do in life. There is no manual to give directions and no training given. Nothing prepares you for motherhood, let alone for a child who has a mental illness. But Luke is defined as more than just having a mental illness, he is kind, thoughtful, and has a good moral character. I know that may seem hard to believe given his current situation, but it is true nonetheless. In the report, you can see that we never gave up on Luke, we sought therapists, doctors, and psychologists, anyway, or anything we could possibly do to get our child the help he needed. Luke struggled academically and socially in school. He persevered and graduated early. Luke went on to complete welding school and was looking for a job when the pandemic hit. Luke has always had high ambitions, set goals for himself, and will work hard until he achieves those goals. His goal currently is to return to society to be a productive member who will serve God and others.

My son is a good person, who made a terrible mistake. Luke has spent the last 600+ days incarcerated. He has had many long days, hours, and minutes to think about his behavior and he has fully accepted responsibility for his actions. I

understand the gravity of the offense, however, knowing the kind of man Luke is today, I can assure you that he has had time to reflect, learn from this experience, and will move on to do greater things that will compensate for this lapse of character. We have spent a great deal of time talking on the phone, writing letters, and visiting him every Sunday. Our family has grown stronger because of this situation even as hard as it has been, I want the court to know that Luke has matured, he understands that his actions have consequences and he is a changed person. Luke speaks of serving God and mentoring others so they do not get into the kind of trouble he did. He wants to be a positive role model for others. Just as we did when he was younger, we will stand by Luke's side and continue to get him any help he needs while he continues to grow and mature. He has a wonderful family support system.

I am hopeful that you will consider Luke's situation and grant him a reduced sentence.

Thank you for your time,

Shelly Nicozisin